

Brussels, 27 November 2009

In the political guidelines for the new Commission which I presented to the European Parliament in September, I set out why this is a time of great opportunity for Europe. Our ambition should be to use the next five years to put the enlarged Europe firmly on the path to a sustainable and successful future. I am delighted that you will be returning to join me in a second mandate to work within these guidelines and to help deliver our agenda for 2020.

The Commission is the essential motor for the European Union's efforts to address tomorrow's challenges and to use the benefits of the Lisbon Treaty to best effect. Europe needs a strong, political and dynamic Commission to offer the leadership and direction to drive this work forward.

The portfolio for the Digital Agenda

You will be the commissioner with responsibility for the Digital agenda. You will also be a Vice President. As in the past, changing circumstances may also mean that I will need to take a fresh look at the mix of portfolios in the course of the mandate and may change responsibilities accordingly.

I want the Commission to help make Europe a true digital area. Achieving this goal will depend on our capacity to exploit the potential of ICT as a major enabling technology for raising productivity and addressing long-term challenges such as energy efficiency and healthcare:

- You will take the lead in preparing the European Digital Agenda, to promote an integrated ICT policy framework, addressing both supply and demand for digital services, products and contents, ensuring that Europe remains at the technological forefront in this area.

Mrs Neelie KROES
Commissioner designate

- The EU needs high speed internet networks to realise the potential of ICTs. Therefore, I would like you to elaborate a policy framework to promote investment in high speed internet and set up a coordinated spectrum policy.
- I would also like you to establish an integrated single market for the delivery of electronic services. The EU possesses massive creative, cultural and multilingual potential, which efficient ICT tools can help to tap and transform into productivity gains.
- Europe must also invest in the ICT skills of its citizens. Your role will be to avoid a 'digital divide' and to give the possibility to all citizens to acquire e-skills.

To help you fulfil these responsibilities, you will have a reconfigured DG Information Society under your authority. The MEDIA programme will be transferred to DG EAC. You will have following European agencies in your portfolio: European Network Information Security Agency (ENISA), as well as the future European Body for Regulators of Electronic Communications (BEREC). You will also be responsible for article Article 7 procedures under the telecoms regulatory framework and for standard setting in the portfolio area.

Working together as a College

As President, I am determined to ensure that the College of Commissioners is the political heart of the Commission. You know from your own experience how collegiality is central to how the Commission works. Being a College means that all can contribute to decisions, and all share collective responsibility once initiatives are adopted. The Commission must be a team working together effectively to ensure the coherence and consistency of Commission policies. I will lead regular meetings and orientation debates to discuss important or cross-cutting proposals during their preparatory phase, to ensure relevant input from all Commissioners. My Cabinet, the Secretariat General and the Legal Service will work closely with your Cabinet and your services to make this approach a reality. As you know, and according to the Treaty, the President is the guarantor of collegiality.

Our effectiveness and credibility rests upon the quality of our output, our professionalism, and our respect for the highest standards of public service ethics. This requires a rigorous smart regulation agenda, respecting subsidiarity and proportionality and devoting our attention to where we can bring clear added value; particular attention to sound financial management; and full respect for the Code of Conduct of the Members of the European Commission. It also, of course, means that we must stay focused on our overriding mission to promote and defend the common European interest. I will establish the guidelines within which the Commission is to work and we will discuss them in more detail at one of our forthcoming seminars.

An effective Commission must also form a successful partnership with the Member States and the other institutions, and in particular with the European Parliament. The Treaty of Lisbon sets out the roles of the institutions very clearly. The Treaty of Lisbon sets out the roles of the institutions very clearly. As you know, according to the Treaty, the Commission "shall ensure the application of the Treaties and of measures adopted by the institutions pursuant to them". The Treaty will also bring an important new dimension to our relations with national parliaments.

I would like us to take our partnership with the European Parliament to a new level. That requires an investment, in terms of political attention and in terms of time, from every member of the Commission. Availability for plenary sessions and committee meetings of the Parliament is a central part of the responsibilities of Commissioners, and directly linked to the accountability and legitimacy of the Commission as a whole.

Our first opportunity to start this process will be when you take part in hearings with the parliamentary committee covering your portfolio area. This is one of the foundation stones of the Commission's democratic accountability: as you know, it is not only an opportunity to set out your ambitions for your portfolio, but also to illustrate your understanding of the role of the Commission and the obligations of Commissioners.

I believe that the past five years have shown that when the Commission focuses on the key challenges for Europe, and when we work together effectively, we can deliver enormous benefits to Europeans. I look forward to working together with you again to shape a successful future for the EU for the decades to come.

José Manuel BARROSO